



# The Catholic Reporter

Catholic Bishops' Conference of PNG & SI - Commission on Social Communications, P.O. Box 398, Waigani, NCD Tel.: 325 9577 - Fax: 323 2551

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## FAITH AND LIFE, BRIDGING THE GAP

By Bishop Rolando C. Santos  
CM - Alotau

**BISHOP Rolando Santos CM of Alotau released on 13 January 2013 a Circular Letter containing Pastoral Recommendations for the Year of Faith (11 Oct. 2012 – 24 Nov. 2013). Catholic Reporter asked him about the main highlights of his message:**

**Bishop Santos, what is the situation of faith and Christian life among people at the moment?**

**BISHOP SANTOS.** Here in our diocese and the rest of Papua New Guinea, one can easily observe that in spite of the fact that the majority of our people are Christian, yet, many are grossly ignorant of the faith. Many do not live as the Lord has commanded. There are many broken marriages and homes; single mothers abandoned by the fathers of their children; incest, fornication and adultery; women physically abused by their married or live-in partners. There are also many young people who wander about not knowing what life

is all about. They resort to alcoholism and drug abuse in search of happiness which they have a vague idea about. They steal and disturb the peace of the community. There are also many quarrels and disputes in communities arising from allegations of adultery and land issues which divide entire families, clans and communities. There is growing poverty around us with people living in settlements. There is the continued destruction of the environment due to irresponsible behaviour and greed. Many are misled by erroneous propaganda. Some think that contraceptives, sterilization and even abortion can improve their lives without them having to exert any effort at disciplining themselves or correcting whatever wrong attitudes and behaviour they might have.

**What do you think can be done about this sad situation? What are your pastoral recommendations?**

**BISHOP SANTOS.** I think we need to identify specific suggestions especially for the priests, the

laity, and the youth.

**Let's start with the priests...**

**BISHOP SANTOS.** Proclaiming the Gospel is more important than building schools and churches. In this consists the priest's entire vocation and mission: to follow Christ who was anointed by the Spirit to preach the Gospel to the poor. Priests need to live, then, in a way that is worthy of their vocation. Everyone should see in them the image of Christ whom they strive to follow. They have to be present and available to their flock, not leave their parish unattended for an extended period of time. They need to visit all their communities and make sure they are nourished, not only with the Word of God, but also the Eucharist. They must prepare well their homilies, starting one week in advance. They need to catechize their people. Every parish priest should have a plan and a program of evangelization and catechesis, to carry out credibly and joyfully.

**But the catechetical work mostly depends on the lay people...**

**BISHOP SANTOS.** Sure! And not only that, but all the baptized have a duty to evangelize. This arises from the missionary mandate: "Go, and make disciples of all nations." However, those whom the Spirit has chosen to help the priests, especially members of the parish animation team, catechists, prayer leaders, community leaders and members of the parish council, should particularly be assiduous in this work of evangelization. The service of education and health should be a witness to the love of Christ who went about doing good.

In your Circular Letter you particularly touch on issues regarding the family...

**BISHOP SANTOS.** The values of marriage and family are being eroded today not only because of the government's constant campaign on population control and the use of contraceptives, but also because of the ignorance people have of sacramental marriage and the sacredness of human life. We need to instruct the people on the Christian meaning of sexuality, love

and marriage, and help them to be responsible in using their freedom according to the plan of God. We must teach people the evil and the immorality of using contraceptives, and not to water down this teaching of the Church. The use of contraceptives gives the wrong message that you can do anything you wish provided you are "protected".

**Can the youth follow this path?**

**BISHOP SANTOS.** I share the position of Pope Benedict XVI, who said, "My greatest concern is for young people. They are exposed to the school of 'bad teachers' and they need to understand the value of life in a stable family founded on marriage." To the rich young man who asked what he should do to enter eternal life, Jesus said: keep the commandments, sell all that you have and come follow me. In my turn, what I can say is: To know the way to more abundant life, you must listen to Jesus. You must also listen to parents, pastors, and the Church who represent Jesus for you in this life. (GL)

## Church personnel honoured

A number of Catholic clergy and lay people active in Church related services and professions are in the 2013 New Year Honours List recently released by the Office of the Governor General of Papua New Guinea, His Excellency Grand Chief Sir Michael Ogio:

**GRAND COMPANION OF THE ORDER OF THE LOGOHU ("GCL") CONFERRED WITH THE TITLE OF "CHIEF":** Most Reverend Anthony BURGESS, DD – For service to the Catholic Church and the community through his leadership in pastoral work and delivery of social services over many years as a priest and

more recently as Bishop of Wewak Diocese in the East Sepik Province.

**COMPANION OF THE ORDER OF STAR OF MELANESIA ("CSM"):** Father Dario MONEGATTI, SVD. For service to the community as Catholic priest of the Missionary Society of the Divine Word working for over 40 years in a number of provinces including Bougainville during the rebellion and subsequent difficult period.

**OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF LOGOHU ("OL"):** Father Donald DEBES, OFM Cap. For service to the community through his contribution as a Catholic priest to the pas-

toral care and advancement of the people of the Highlands provinces for over 40 years.

**MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF LOGOHU ("ML"):**

Ms. Vero GEVI. For service to women development and the Catholic Church.

Brother Patrick Howley. For service to education and Divine Word University.

The LOGOHU MEDAL ("LM"):

Mr. Patrick MATBOB (Divine Word University). For service to education and journalism.

**Congratulations!!!**



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## Vatican Council II

# THE CHURCH, MYSTERY OF COMMUNION

**THE key to understanding the Council is the theology of the Church as Mystery of Communion, spelt out in relationships of communion as expressed by members of the Church, and in our organization and structures. The biblical images of People of God and Body of Christ are taken up strongly as images of the Church.**

The theology and spirituality of communion has been promoted and written about for many years before the Council. As this school of thought grew it became more widespread becoming the key concept of the Council. It set us on the road to reform and renewal challenging us to take this theology and spirituality into our lives.

### Church Documents

- "The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race."

[Vatican II: Lumen Gentium 1].

- "The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the Council's documents." [Extraordinary Synod C.1, 1985]
- "The conditions for a spirituality of communion ... : the ability to perceive the light of the mystery of the Trinity shining on the faces of brothers and sisters around us, to be attentive to "our brothers and sisters in faith .... as 'those who are a part of me';... the ability as well to recognize all that is positive in the other so as to welcome it and prize it as a gift that God gives me through that person, ... ; and finally, the ability "to 'make room' for our brothers and sisters, bearing 'each other's burdens' [Africae Munus 35]

### Scripture

Jn 17: 20-23, "May they be one":  
Eph 4: 3-6, Paul "There is one body, one spirit ..."

The theology of the Church as Communion has been developed in every major document of the Church in recent years. These have indicated the implications of this for priests, religious and lay people, for our life as Church in all its aspects.

The challenge for us is to take these writings into our lives in a way that we can live it and promote it every day of our lives, in every situation, not only as Church but as citizens of this world.

### Reflection and discussion:

In many ways the world has greater unity than ever before in communication, travel, international organizations, business, science and technology. Yet there is still great disunity, war, destruction, injustice and abuse of rights.

- How are we called today to live greater unity as Church?
- How are we challenged to create and promote greater unity in the world in which we live?

## The Teachings of the Second Vatican Council

**By Fr Roger Purcell MSC  
National Director  
Community Animation Service**

IN this issue we start presenting a brief summary of some of the main teachings of the Second Vatican Council (1962-'65) which leads us to a new theological approach, for a new foundation for pastoral care and mission, in a new and different world.

Before the Council in the post-war years there was an increasing realization that the world had changed drastically, and that the Church had to reform and renew itself to meet this new situation. There was much writing and talking urging the Church towards this reform with many prominent people working towards

new thinking in theology, scripture, liturgy and spirituality.

Much of this work and thinking towards renewal was taken up and expressed in the Council documents. The teaching of the Council took up and expressed this movement for change demanded by an entirely new situation in the world. In this new world, the Council gave us a renewed mentality and attitudes, leading to renewed ways of being Church.

In the years after the Council there was a great hope and enthusiasm all around the world for this new era in the life of the Church. We saw many efforts to implement the teaching of the Council, the growth of movements and organizations dedicated to this, many of which remain with us. We are now 50 years on from the

Council with the challenge before us to assess our situation as Church in the light of the Council, and evaluate our progress in renewing ourselves.

The world continues to change radically with many people more concerned about the matters of this world and less interested in God, religion or Church. There are many challenges still before us as we continue to find ways to live the spirit of the Council by ongoing renewal of our lives individually and in community.

In the following series of articles we offer some indication of the main teaching of the Council with selected texts and questions for reflection and discussion.

Please use them in any way you can or wish to promote the renewal of Church for the transformation of the world.

## HIV in children preventable

CATHOLIC health care workers in Papua New Guinea are playing a key role in supporting an ambitious global plan to stop the transmission of the virus that causes AIDS from pregnant mothers to their children.

Discussed during the XIX International AIDS Conference in Washington, the plan involves increasing the availability of the drugs that reduce HIV levels in the body so that transmission does not occur. In wealthy countries, the availability of such drugs has lowered transmission rates to virtually zero, but that's not the case in countries most heavily affected by the HIV epidemic.

"We really do have hope that we can stop AIDS in children," said Msgr. Robert Vitillo, a special adviser on HIV and AIDS to Caritas Internationalis who sits on the 15-member international steering committee that is supervising the program.

In 2011 the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS -- known as UNAIDS -- announced a plan to prevent transmission of the disease to children by assuring that pregnant women get the testing, treatment and counseling they need to stop the virus from spreading.

Msgr. Vitillo said an important key to the program's success is testing women early, so that any who are found to carry the virus can be put on antiretroviral medication. The women then continue the medication through birth and breast-feeding. While initial programs had discontinued women once the child stopped nursing, Msgr. Vitillo said that approach has been largely discarded in favor of keeping the woman on antiretroviral drugs indefinitely.

"We don't want to save the children and then have them lose their mothers," Msgr. Vitillo said.

Another part of the program involves early testing of children so that if any are infected, they can receive prompt medical treatment.

Msgr. Vitillo said the program faces challenges that bedevil the entire response to HIV.

"To make this work, we have to figure out what obstacles women face, why they cannot access testing or if they do get tested why they may not come back for the results. It's often a problem of stigma and discrimination, and we need to combat that by involving the entire community in the HIV response," he said.

PNG Catholic HIV and AIDS Services Incorporated Director, Sr Tarcisia Hunhoff, said that the program can succeed only by becoming "male friendly" in order to prevent male partners from discouraging women of getting involved or from continuing treatment.

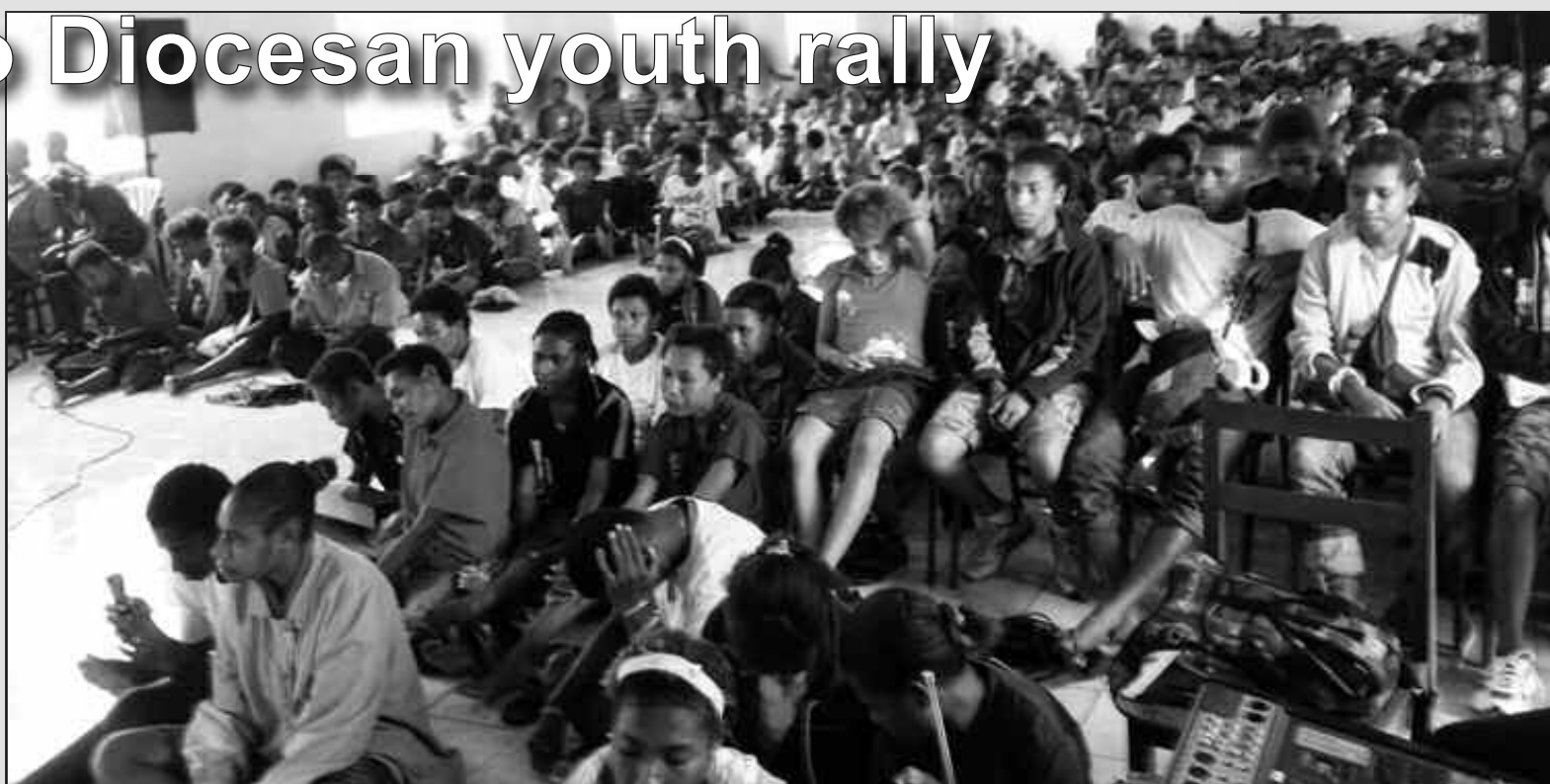
"Men's Clinics have been started in some places with promising results. We are also currently piloting the Men taking Action Program which aims to encourage the participation of men in maternal and child health," Sr Tarcisia said.

"These programs intentionally reach out to men. Couple counselling provides a safe, neutral environment for the husband and wife to improve their communication, especially when communication isn't present or effective. When communication is good it takes a little encouragement for the men to be convinced that it isn't just women's business."

## Vanimo Diocesan youth rally

ABOUT 700 youth from the coastal and inland parishes of the Diocese of Vanimo participated in a rally on 6-12 January organised by Fr. Joseph Bijeesh HGN, the youth chaplain of the diocese with the help of the youth leaders, other priests, and sisters.

Seminars were given on faith formation, kinds of sin, HIV/AIDS awareness, importance of sacraments, law and order issues, abuse of drugs and its impact on a person and community. Sandaun province Governor Amkat Mai also visited the youth gathering along with diocesan Bishop Cesare Bonivento, PIME. (Balthasar Akus)



# Port Moresby loses outstanding mother and Communion Minister

By Andrew Mexie  
St. John's - Tokarara

ROSEMARY Miria, a pioneer leader of St. John the Apostle Parish in Tokarara, Archdiocese of Port Moresby, suddenly passed away on the night of 30 December 2012, Feast of the Holy Family, after spending the day in the parish and having served at Mass for the last time as an Extraordinary Minister of the Holy Communion.

She was seen as an exemplary Christian and like Mother Mary took Jesus into her life and did all she could to share the Love of Christ with others, especially the sick, the poor and the needy in the community.



During her funeral service on 12 January, Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME, former Parish Priest, expressed very much how deeply he, along with the rest of the parish, appreciated Rosemary's dedication to serving the people in need without counting the personal cost.

Seeing her whole family

in such a deep mourning was a sign, not only of how greatly her loving presence will be missed, but also showed how deeply Rosemary touched lives by her unconditional love and care.

She always wanted peace and unity at any cost in the family. She did her best to accomplish this not only with her motherly concern and persevering efforts, but also with a life of deep prayer and trust in God.

As Jesus went about calling everyone "friends" and shared all He had with them, Rosemary through

her ministry as a spouse, a mother, a granny and a true friend also imitated Jesus and went about doing good and sharing all she had with all those she met.

Rosemary Arua Miria was born in Yule Island in 1952, the daughter of a Catholic teacher, and had been married to Mr. Joseph Miria, himself a long standing Church leader and Communion Minister in the Archdiocese of Port Moresby, for about 40 years.

She will now continue her ministry of love to all of us from heaven.

We thank and praise God for having given us such a lovely person to enjoy for some time on this earth as we look forward to meeting her one day in heaven.

## Vatican Missionary University now offers Masters in Social Communication

(Vatican City) - THE First Level Masters in Social Communication, in the Missionary and Intercultural Context, promoted by the Urbaniana Pontifical University, intends to form in the Church professionals in the world of Social Communication and of the Means of Mass Communication.

The Masters program is particularly recommended to the young people, religious or laity, who intend to work in areas characterized by various missionary commitments, by multi-cultures and by inter-religious dialogue.

The objective is to avail to the theoretical, ethical, socio-anthropological and ecclesial knowledge necessary for the realization and management of the means of mass communication.

In addition, it is aimed at availing practical skills on the logistics of production, realization and economic management of periodicals, networks, a press office, a radio or TV program, Video shooting and documentaries



in the intercultural contexts of scarce resources and the digital divide.

The Masters program is furnished with a qualified and extremely competent teaching panel, which is in-

ternational and comprised of persons directly and concretely involved in the world of multimedia and social communication.

The program is intensive and requires a constant par-

ticipation. It however lasts only for one academic year including the professional apprenticeship to be done in the principal Catholic media houses in Rome and Italy at large. (pccs.va)

## 2013 Diocesan Youth Coordinators tasks outlined

By Marcellin Kerepas  
Diocese of Bougainville

NINETEEN diocesan youth coordinators gathered at Kefamo Conference Center, Goroka from 18th to 25th November, representing all the Catholic dioceses of Papua New Guinea. The meeting was organized by Fr. Shanthi Puthussery PIME, Secretary of the Commission for Youth and Laity of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (CBC). The purpose of the gathering was to evaluate the pastoral care of young people in the dioceses and to develop plans for the year 2013.

As Fr. Shanthi began his office in April 2011, an evaluation was immediately conducted to assess the pastoral care of young people in the dioceses. The information was gathered through a diocesan level census of the pastoral care of the young people covering the years 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Based on this evaluation Fr. Shanthi came up with the 'Doing by Learning - Learning by Doing' materials for 2012 for all the Catholic young people in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, which were distributed in the dioceses through the youth coordinators in November 2011 during their gathering.

By November 2012, according to the individual reports, Alotau, Bougainville, Kavieng, Rabaul and Wewak dioceses had done very well since the respective diocesan youth coordinators had worked hard with the learning materials. Aitape, Bereina, Kerema, Lae, Port Moresby and Vanimo have tried with the learning materials and gradually got into an organized pastoral care of the young people in their respective dioceses. Mendi diocese has translated the materials into Tok Pisin; other dioceses have made their own way and not much was reported.

Fr. Shanthi has conducted eight days of parish youth leaders' leadership training in eleven dioceses in 2012, and gave them grades like 'Excellent' to Alotau and Port Moresby dioceses; and 'Very Good' to Bougainville, Rabaul and Wewak dioceses. Others received 'Good' and 'Satisfactory'. The grading was a bit of surprise for all the youth coordinators! Fr. Shanthi has distributed his schedule and timetable of the parish youth leaders' leadership training for the dioceses still to be visited in 2013.

By now 'Doing by Learning - Learning by Doing' materials for the year 2013 have also been printed with 61 pages in 3000 copies for the distribution to the dioceses. The focus of the learning materials 2013 is Faith as part of the celebration of the "Year of Faith" (11th October 2012 - 24th November 2013).

The outcome of the discussion on the "Resolutions of Responsibilities of a Diocesan Youth Coordinator" was the highlight of the gathering of the diocesan youth coordinators 2012 in Goroka last November, although the discussion of it began in 2011. Nineteen diocesan youth coordinators, the Secretary of the Commission for Youth and Laity and the Deputy Bishop for Youth, Most Rev. Rochus Tatamai MSC of Bereina, signed the document during a prayerful ceremony. A laminated copy of it was sent to the Bishops through the respective youth coordinators.

During the gathering, Marcellin Kerepas from Bougainville and Vincent Damien Numbos from Port Moresby dioceses, presented the 'Eight Stages of Life', the 'Four Areas of Formation' and 'Vocation' from the parish youth leaders' leadership training to the diocesan youth coordinators.

The session with Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME, CBC Secretary for Social Communications, on Catholic Reporter, the CBC Website and other initiatives of his office shed much light to the youth coordinators.

The presence of Bp. Rochus Tatamai MSC, Deputy Bishop of the Commission for Youth, made the eight days of the Diocesan Youth Coordinators gathering very significant and meaningful because his words of encouragement to every participant were direct and inspirational. As he represents the Catholic Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands his words have encouraged every coordinator.

# Year 2012 HIV services by CHASI

(Catholic HIV and AIDS Services Inc.)



56,885 people were tested at 114 sites between 1 January - 31 December, 2012.  
 77% of people tested were between the ages of 25-49.  
 18,206 mothers were tested for antenatal care.  
 A total of 3,007 people are on antiretroviral treatment.  
 20 Catholic-run sites are able to prescribe anti-retroviral therapy.  
 There are 232 Provider Initiated Counselling and Testing (PICT) practitioners at 122 sites in 18 provinces; an increase of 104 sites since November 2011.  
 HIV confirmatory testing can now be done at 58 sites in 18 provinces, an increase of 27 sites since November 2011.  
 17,325 people were tested through outreach:

Southern region: male 568 , female 1,127  
 Momase region: male 1,465 , female 1,309  
 New Guinea Islands: male 3,750 , female 4,458  
 Highlands: male 2,131 , female 2,517.  
 862 couples attended counselling in 26 sites from January to November, 2012.  
 Antenatal care testing is being taken up by more facilities, accounting for 32 per cent of all CHASI's testing.  
 CHASI supports 130 staff positions around PNG.

### CHASI Logo

*THE rainbow represents the Covenant from the Old Testament. Since discrimination used to be so strong against people with HIV, the rainbow represents a desire to counteract the discrimination by showing that they are part of the Covenant. The red ribbon in the centre is the international symbol for HIV.*

# PROGRESS MADE AGAINST HIV IN PNG

**By Catholic HIV and AIDS Services Incorporated**

**IF someone was told that they had HIV and AIDS back in 1987, when the virus first emerged in Papua New Guinea, it was regarded as a death sentence.**

Back then there were no drugs to manage the symptoms, few resources dedicated to HIV and little understanding about how to handle the virus. There was plenty of fear and stigma though.

Fortunately in that time there has been significant change, mostly for the better. Over the past ten years the world has made giant inroads into the HIV epidemic. While too many people still suffer from the virus, there is now lifesaving medication called anti-retroviral therapy (ART) that, if taken correctly, allows people with HIV to live full and productive lives.

When the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands started Catholic HIV and AIDS Services Inc. (CHASI - formerly known as the National Catholic AIDS Office) in 2004, treatment for HIV was not available. Back then there was a concern that PNG would suffer the same toll as many African countries if proactive steps weren't taken. That has not eventuated.

Thanks to a concerted effort, the impact - while still great - has not been as bad as first predicted. And the Catholic Church has been at the forefront of the HIV response.

Recognising the importance of people knowing their

HIV status, one of the first priorities of CHASI was to establish voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) sites around the country. Bethany VCT Centre in Madang was the first centre established by CHASI. Today, Catholic Church-run facilities offer VCT at 122 sites around PNG, in every province except Oro. In 2012, 56,885 people were counselled and tested in Catholic facilities, accounting for close to a third of all testing in PNG. At the time of writing, 3,007 people receive their lifesaving ART medication from Catholic facilities; that is one third of all people on ART in PNG. ART is internationally recognised as one of the most effective means of HIV prevention.

Last year the World Health Organisation issued guidelines recommending that in the case of couples who are serodiscordant (one partner living with HIV and the other not) ART is offered to the person living with HIV to prevent his or her partner from becoming infected with the virus. And the Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission (PPTCT) Program continues to show outstanding results. The program is offered in over 50 Catholic-run sites, with more implementing the program each year. PPTCT offers the real possibility of meeting the UNAIDS Global Plan goal of eliminating new infections among children by 2015.

With all these developments there has been a decrease in stigma of HIV. More people are now comfortable to disclose their HIV status; less people are ignorant about issues of HIV. In spite of the successes that

have been made against HIV, we should all be mindful that there is a long way to go: too many people continue to be infected with HIV; too many families are suffering from its impact. Only through a concerted effort from all of us and ongoing vigilance will we continue to reduce the spread of HIV in Papua New Guinea.



Sr. Davida Strojek (centre) with health workers from Rebiambul preparing to give HIV awareness and provide voluntary counselling and testing during last year's Mt Hagen Show.



Speaking out against stigma: part of the large crowd in Kokopo that marched on World AIDS Day, 1 Dec. 2012.